

NO 5-1 12 Oct 72

# Witnesses Boycott Watergate Inquiry

WASHINGTON (A P) — Members of the House Banking Committee met today to try to renew efforts for an investigation of matters related to the Democratic headquarters break-in, but were forced to recess for lack of a quorum.

None of the four witnesses who had been invited to appear, all associated with the White House or President Nixon's campaign, showed up.

The meeting was also boycotted by all but one of the Republican members of the committee.

The recess was "subject to the call of the chair" without immediate indication whether the effort would be renewed.

"President Nixon is responsible for those four empty chairs," Chairman Wright Patman, D-Tex., said, referring to his unaccepted invitation for persons associated with Nixon's campaign or on his staff to testify before the committee.

The invitations had gone to John Mitchell, former head of the Nixon campaign and former attorney general; former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans, chairman of the Finance Committee for the Re-Election of the President; Clark MacGregor, chairman of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, and White House aide John Wesley Dean III.

Attorneys for Nixon's re-

election committee wrote Patman that on their advice Mitchell, Stans and MacGregor would not appear.

Patman said that just before the meeting he had received a letter from Dean that he would not come before the committee because of the issue of executive privilege protecting confidential relations between the President and his assistants.

The only Republican committee member present, Rep. Bill Frenzel of Minnesota, made a point of order that the meeting was illegally called because of failure to give seven days' notice. Patman overruled the motion and the session continued, although fewer than half the members were present, 18 of the 37 members, including some who arrived after the opening.

"I venture the prediction that today will mark the turning point in the polls," Rep. Henry S. Reuss, D-Wis., said.

He said that by not pressing for full investigation and disclosure "Mr. Nixon shows contempt for the American people."

Reuss read extracts from what he said were hundreds of letters he has received from persons protesting the break-in and alleged bugging of Democratic National Headquarters in the Watergate building and related events, including what Reuss said were some who had voted for Nixon and now regret it.